

# **CALFED Water Transfer Program**

## **FY 2000 Implementation**

### **1. Program Background**

The Water Transfer program is a framework of actions, policies, and processes that, collectively, will facilitate water transfers and the further development of a statewide water transfer market. The program focuses on improving the rules and procedures within which water transfers must function and helps promote a more predictable and efficient approval and transport atmosphere. The program is intent on promoting responsible water transfers and avoiding irresponsible ones.

Actions included in the Water Transfer Program range from streamlining the approval process for proposed transfers to requiring the disclosure of additional impact assessments by transfer proponents. The program also will define transferable water, thus clarifying when and how water can be transferred. Finally, the program is addressing issues regarding conveyance capacity, hoping to improve the predictability and reliability of gaining access for transporting water transfers in existing state and federal conveyance facilities.

### **2. FY 2000 Funding Priorities**

Staff recommendation is to spend the \$350,000 to initiate the development of a publicly available, interactive web-site. This web-site will serve as an interim and long-term interface to stakeholders and the public with respect to CALFED water transfer actions including: 1) streamlining the approval process, 2) defining transferable water, 3) providing public disclosure of proposed transfers (the clearinghouse concept), and 4) facilitating the sharing of water transfer related data, research, and assessment methodology. It is the intent of CALFED and the CALFED agencies that this web-site be a long-term piece of an improved water transfer market, thus it will continually grow and be refined as more is learned, as statutes change, or as interest and use otherwise demands. The web-site will initially be designed to include:

- an on-line transfer application process that will provide proponents with information regarding who has approval authority (USBR, SWRCB, DWR), what must be provided to the responsible agency, and what criteria the agency will use during the review period;
- a searchable database of all approved transfers (going back to the late 1980's and adding new transfers as they are approved);
- information regarding other CALFED Water Transfer Program actions.

This initial expenditure allows the development of initial web-site functions and the hosting of it until December 2000 when it would be hosted by the yet-to-be-established clearinghouse. The public will be able to view the web-site in early summer of 2000.

### **3. Stakeholder and Public Input**

Limited stakeholder input into the web-site is planned during the development phase, prior to a public release. CALFED staff and CALFED agency representatives working on this project will meet with some select stakeholders to ensure that items like the on-line application process are useful (CVP and SWP contractors, other local water suppliers, and private companies). Meetings will also be held with interested parties to ensure that the searchable database is designed to provide the most useful service to those who may use it (university and non-profit staff, consultants, public interest, government agencies).

Additional stakeholder and public interaction will be included as the web-site continues to be built and expanded after the initial public release.

### **4. Proposed Method for Distributing Funding**

The Water Transfer Program proposes to distribute the FY 2000 funds through a directed contract administered through the USBR. Past web-site development efforts undertaken by the USBR have followed a similar approach.

### **5. Time line**

CALFED staff and CALFED agency representatives have already begun the development of this much needed resource. To continue forward, CALFED staff recommends that contracts for the necessary web-site and database development be awarded in January 2000. This will allow stakeholders and the public to use the initial functions of this tool by early summer 2000.

A demonstration of the web-site and its initial functions will be provided to the BDAC and the Policy Group in late summer 2000, after the public release.